TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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No. 139
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The New Rural Society*

MILO K. SWANTON

• We live in an era of new hybrids. Among the most significant of these is the rapidly growing New Rural Society. Yesterday's sharp social cleavages are gone. No longer are blue jeans fully characteristic of the farmer; nor does the man in the gray flannel suit work only on Main Street. The terms "hayseed" and "city slicker" are meaningless in the light of today's most significant social merger. In a sense the new rural society is neither city nor country.

As I look at this new rural society, I see it developing principally in three areas—at the country crossroads, within or near villages and small cities, and within suburban sections near metropolitan centers. At the country crossroads this new rural society is made up of three different groups or movements—the full-time farmer, the part-time farmer with some off-farm work, and the under-employed of the city. The latter recognizes the farm's invisible yet real income, such as eggs, meat, milk, garden and a house in which to live. And mechanization makes it possible for him or his family to cover much ground and gain more income.

Important in facilitating this present-day rural trend is our modern mobility; for America is truly on wheels. We have the highest ratio of automobiles in the world, the most complete network of all-weather roads and an unhampered supply of petroleum on which to keep going.

We Americans are the "movingest" people on earth, becoming more nomadic each year. According to the United States Census Bureau, "In a year's time, one American in every five changes homes. A majority of these movers are under thirty years of age and a substantial number are over sixty-five." City jobs are plentiful. Good wages are inviting to part-time farm people, and country living is inviting to their city cousins.

Now let us first consider the full-time farmer. He, too, is contributing to this present-day new rural society. He is not the same as the 100 percent farmer of yesterday. He is more of a scientist. He is an engineer, bookkeeper and salesman. He is not only more mechanized, he is also more "capitalized."

What else is he? He is more confused as well as more challenged by the growing economic disparity between the elasticity of his own prices and the rigidity of industrial prices. He is caught between the worthy objective of investment for greater efficiency and the danger of financial over-expansion. Many of these in this new rural society have acquired a machine complex and a tendency to keep up with the Joneses, buying more than is economically justifiable. Most farm operators do not accumulate sufficient capital assets to provide for the rainy day of old age.

Because of today's high capital requirements on the farm, the new

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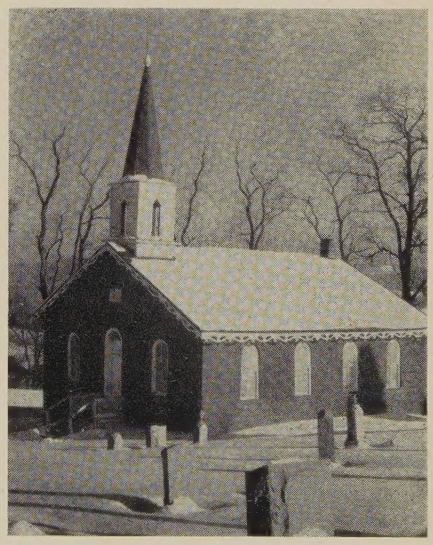

Luoma Photo

* From an address before the American Country Life Association, July 1957.

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rural society is more credit conscious than its ancestors. Like their city cousins, farmers are less inclined to the old ideals of thrift. Saving for the "rainy day" to acquire equity as a prerequisite for establishment of credit seems now to be less of a virtue.

The urge to drive new and expensive cars, to maintain the latest TV sets and to acquire all the gadgets that clever advertisers recommend and that high power credit agencies will finance, induce many farmers or their wives to take city employment. Very often they would profit more, financially, and enjoy richer lives if they would stay at home and do the farm work better. Regrettably the trend toward part-time mothers who leave little school children with house keys pinned to their clothing, is also overtaking rural America.

Photo by Philip Gendreau, N. Y.

However, there are many good reasons for part-time farming, such as limited acreage and production. Such people partly change jobs but not homes. On this new basis, they can afford better schools, roads, homes and churches. On this justifiable new basis they give greater stability to their new rural society.

Let me emphasize that the trend toward part-time farming is a two-way pull. Not all part-time farming is the result of under-employment or inadequate income on the farm. There is a growing trek of industrial and business workers to the country. Just as their part-time country cousins find the need for greater income, so these so-called gray-flanneled fellows, looking for ways to augment their incomes, look to the country where they, too, can cash in on the farm's invisible income from garden, eggs, meat, milk, vegetables and a low-cost home in wide spaces.

Let us move from the country crossroads to the villages and small cities where we find the second great area of new rural society development. Here the merging includes a cross-section of people comparable with the original make-up of the neighboring rural and village communities. It is in this area that the new rural society change is least in conflict.

It is in these villages and small cities that the part-time farmer most often gets his "other" job. Many of his relatives live in these semi-urban communities. Full-time and part-time farmers have grown up with these villagers. Usually they have rubbed shoulders with them for years. Together they have gone, or they still go, to the same church. Chances are their children now attend the same reorganized school systems, being transported to the village and small city schools for elementary as well as for high school attendance.

In a third and very important arena, hybridization of a more painful nature is taking place. I refer to America's "sub-urbia"; for the cities are moving to the country. Moving to city out-skirts are millions looking for space, privacy, and rural beauty. Everywhere we look, suburban living is becoming more the American way of life. If the present trend continues, it is predicted that nearly half our urban population will be living in the suburbs of metropolitan areas twenty years from now.

Thus we see the people of America changing, merging, growing, conflicting—with rural and urban color schemes less vivid than in the days of old.

Today there is a complexity of influences. What will tomorrow bring? Town and country interdependence must continue to grow. Modern agriculture requires more of everything that industry makes while the productive and very highly refined output of our farms supports an increasingly higher standard of living for the entire nation never before seen in all history. In this mutual interdependence neither the Blue nor the Gray can claim exclusive importance.

This merging of the Blue and the Gray—this hybridization of rural and urban concepts and practices—demands new evaluation. To meet the challenge of this new rural society, let us consider new patterns.

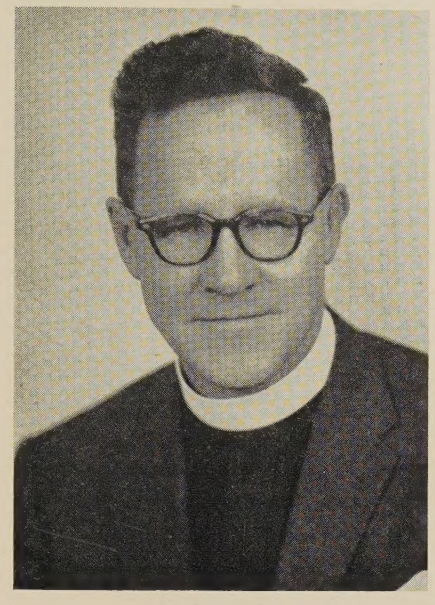
The rural church must and can have a broader horizon. Just as city shopping centers now thrive in locations away from Main Street, so also there is more room around the country church. The same all-weather roads that lead to the cities can also bring the cities to the country for worship. Within this new and stronger rural church, cross currents of new conflict can be quieted and devotion to better understanding be maintained.

New President of Episcopal Rural Workers' Fellowship

• During the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at York, Pennsylvania, October 21-23, the Rural Workers' Fellowship of the Episcopal Church held its annual meeting. At this meeting the announcement was made that the Rev. John Peacock was elected President of the Rural Workers' Fellowship.

The Rev. John Peacock is the first Canadian ever to be elected to this office. Part of his responsibilities will include the publishing of a magazine entitled, "Crossroads."

Mr. Peacock is the rector of the parish of Nelsonville, in Cowansville and Sweetsburg, Quebec, and is the possessor of the Rural Workers Fellowship award for outstanding service in the Rural Church, which he received in October, 1955.



JOHN PEACOCK

"The Rural Church Movement"

• In 1882 Washington Gladden wrote in the *Century* magazine about "The Christian League of Connecticut" and "ignited a flame of concern for the rural church," writes Mark Rich of the Missouri School of Religion in a book, *The Rural Church Movement* (Columbia, Mo., Juniper Knoll Press, 1957. $3.50). Much of the early impetus for the movement, denominational and interdenominational, came from Gladden, Rauschenbusch, Strong and others who rediscovered the social teachings of Jesus.

Dr. Rich has gathered up and interpreted well the numerous sources relating to the forces at work. He notes the early conditions of rural churches from 1620 on, but concentrates on roughly the past 50 years, "the period of cooperation and integration," when the movement became systematically organized. The book was written because of two demands: one, for histories recording experience for the guidance of pastors and administrators; and two, for a textbook to be used in seminaries "where there is instruction in the field of the rural church." The final product serves these needs and will also be of use to all who study developments in American church life.

The summary statement deals with "The Rural Church Movement as a Social Force." Fifty years ago the leaders of the movement viewed the situation in the rural community and the condition of the churches. They then advocated local church federation and other cooperative arrangements, extension of church programs to reach people on isolated farms, the socialization of the local church program, and cooperation of the rural church and community agencies, even the federation of all the rural forces.

Theodore Roosevelt influenced the rural church movement as well as many other facets of American society. He appointed a Commission on Country Life fifty years ago, including such influential persons as Henry Wallace of Des Moines, Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell, and Kenyon L. Butterfield of the Massachusetts College of Agriculture. The report that Commission made in 1909 referred freely to the rural church and made many recommendations for its improvement, despite fears expressed that these distinguished men were not aware of the separation of church and state.

The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. appointed Warren H. Wilson as director of rural church work in 1910, and soon the movement was national as a result of his many works. Wilson had studied sociology under Franklin H. Giddings. Prior to World War I he directed 16 county studies in 12 states, including all churches of all denominations. Until his death in 1937 Wilson was known as the "dean" of the rural church movement.

Through the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council, and the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A., the rural church movement came to maturity by the late 1930s or early 1940s.

As early as 1888 it was thought to have in a theological seminary "a thorough course of lectures on Christian policy in the light of sociology." Since that time the profession of sociology has contributed numerous studies of the rural church.

In the local rural churches, the social emphasis was not welcomed with open arms, and to this day there is much discussion of individualism and evangelism versus social reconstruction. Dr. Rich thinks that the rural church movement has achieved some synthesis of personal piety and social reconstruction. Almost everywhere it is now considered appropriate to study the social situation in which churches find themselves and then to consider what should be done. The crusaders with social views have been mellowed by contacts with those who emphasize the individual's faith. And among the most pietistic Dr. Rich hears "ardent pleas that the church perform its community service."

The Missouri Church Study

• After the close of World War II, various denominations began to express concern about their programs for the rural church in Missouri and discussions between church leaders and rural sociologists pointed up the need to study a large sample of rural churches, including all denominations, which would permit "possible generalizations for the entire state." The Rockefeller Foundation, after the issuance of statements from the Bible College of Missouri and the Rural Sociology Department of the University of Missouri, became interested in the project and agreed to finance "a scientific study of the rural church in Missouri as a social institution." The project was begun officially on January 1, 1952.

The results of the five-year study are now being published in seven parts. The general title is *The Church in Rural Missouri* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, College of Agriculture, Agriculture Experiment Station, Research Bulletins 633 A-G, 1957-1958). The study was organized and conducted by the Department of Sociology, University of Missouri with the cooperation of the Bible College of Missouri, now called the Missouri School of Religion.

At this writing, two of the seven research reports have been issued: Part I—"Introduction," by Lawrence M. Hepple, project leader, discusses the six other parts and describes the background and setting of the study, the plan of investigation and report, and definitions and classifications. Part II, by Milton Coughenour and Lawrence M. Hepple, deals with "Religious Groups in Rural Missouri" and is described as "an analysis of local churches in terms of a sociological concept of the group. The data show the identification, composition, inter-group relationships, and the structure and mechanism of local churches as religious groups."

One of the materials produced for this study was an eight per cent sample consisting of 99 rural townships out of a statewide total of 1,230, stratified, according to the size of the largest village in the township, the number of square miles included, and the number of persons living in the township.

Part II of the study, "Rural Religious Groups," provides findings on the rural church in Missouri. A profile was constructed of the small, medium and large religious groups and a "picture drawn on the basis of the averages for all the rural churches included in this analysis." Excerpts follow.

In 1952, there were 505 rural religious groups in the 99 rural townships of the state sample. More than 73 per cent, or 371, were church-type groups and 27 per cent, or 134, were sect-type groups.

In Missouri "the rural church is still predominantly an open country church with 64 per cent located in the open country, compared with 23 per cent in small villages, and 13 per cent in large villages."

"The average rural church was 64 years old at the time of the survey; the average church-type group was 71 years old compared with 27 for sect-type groups. Of all religious groups, 17 per cent have been organized less than 20 years, while 25 per cent had been organized more than 80 years."

In terms of size and composition, "the average rural congregation had 96 participating members of which 45 per cent were male and 55 per cent female." Twenty-two per cent of rural churches had Sunday worship services on one Sunday or less a month; 33 per cent had services on two Sundays; and 45 per cent had services every Sunday. While 23 per cent of the church-type groups were quarter-time, 38 per cent half-time, and 39 per cent full-time, sect-type groups were 18 per cent quarter-time, 19 per cent half-time, and 63 per cent full-time. Thirty-two per cent of open country religious groups had full-time services, as did 57 per cent of small village churches and 87 per cent of large village churches.

"Approximately nine out of every ten rural churches had a Sunday school; 61 per cent had a woman's organization, while 45 per cent had a youth organization and 34 per cent a choir; less than 15 per cent had a men's club; only six per cent had a young adult organization; and, only two per cent had older adult organizations." The typical church-type group had a Sunday school, women's organization, and youth organization, while the sect-type group had only a Sunday school. In the open country, a majority of the religious groups had a Sunday school and women's organizations as compared with both of these plus a youth organization and choir in both small and large village churches."

Intra-group recreational activities were studied also and it was found that "the typical rural religious group had church suppers (78 per cent) in which the entire congregation participated, and provided recreation for youth (54 per cent). Forty-seven per cent provided activities for children; 25 per cent furnished recreational activities for young adults; and four per cent sponsored such activities for older adults; and four per cent had a nursery during worship services. . . . "

Inter-group social service activities were reported and "rural religious group contributed to orphanages and old folk homes (67 per cent and 5[illegible] per cent, respectively), while 45 per cent contributed to hospitals as well. Twenty-four per cent provided aid in some way to individuals or groups in the community during past years, and 13 per cent contributed to international welfare. One out of three rural churches did not engage in any of these activities. A typical church-type group contributed to orphanages, old folks homes, and hospitals, while a typical sect-type group made no contribution to any benevolent activity. . . ."

Under the heading "Intra-group social service activities," it appeared that "the usual activity was sending flowers to the sick or to the funerals of members (86 per cent of the religious groups); but only 39 per cent had a program of visitation for the sick, and 36 per cent for the aged. Twenty per cent had sent Christmas or Thanksgiving baskets during the year; and nine per cent had provided help to the medically indigent. Both church-type and sect-type groups had records similar to the foregoing. . . ."

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Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Socio-Economic Aspects of Manpower Adjustments: Low Income Rural Areas*

WILLIAM H. METZLER

• Economic and cultural development has progressed at highly variable rates in the United States as well as in the rest of the world. Cultural growth has pyramided at the crossroads and the market places—at the places where people exchange new information and ideas. Meanwhile many people remote from the areas of cultural cross-fertilization have continued in the routines of life that have been impressed upon them from generation to generation. Cultural interchange has been particularly slow in case of families and groups which strongly emphasize moral, religious, and other basic cultural values which differ from those in society as a whole.

In spite of our highly developed means of communication, cultural disparities in our society are still so great that one group is quite unable to comprehend the other. We would like to believe that all rural families are now being reached by modern ideas and ways of thinking. Students at the grassroots level, however, still find it most difficult to bring new ideas about farming, homemaking, or community activities to people who are still outside the round of our general community life and cultural development.

New tools, new products, improved methods of production, and higher standards of living have been part of the cultural growth in the rapidly developing sectors of the economy. These have resulted in a spiraling of production, consumption, capital, and employment opportunities in the urban centers of the nation. This expansion has been particularly great during recent years and has attracted to it people from the less developed parts of the economy. During the last two decades, movement from small unprofitable hill farms has snowballed, and we now have the problem of adjusting our most independent, unsophisticated citizens into a highly complex fabric of group activities and responsibilities.

Technological development and commercial organization in agriculture is now matching that which had previously begun in industry, and farming is becoming completely integrated into the commercial economy. Producers in such an economy must gauge their production to match market demands or they may become impoverished by glutting the market. Consequently, as farm technology advances there must be a continued movement of manpower out of agriculture if farm prosperity is to continue. Marginal producers must shift into other lines of economic activity. Their alternatives might include some combination of subsistence farming, commercial agriculture, and nonfarm employment, which would permit them to avoid the full force of commercial competition.

Cultural values:

This paper will deal particularly with low-income people in the hill-and-mountain country in the southeastern part of the country. It is based largely on observations made while doing survey work among them and is not intended to be critical either of the people themselves or of their patterns of life. They retain many values that the rest of us have lost and we have no reliable yardstick to evaluate our losses or gains. The comments apply neither to all low-income people nor to all hill people. They do apply, in part at least, to subsistence

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* From an Address presented at a joint meeting of the American Sociological Society and the Rural Sociological Society, Seattle, Washington, August 1958.

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farmers generally. They are directed toward the cultural aspects of the economic adjustment that low-income people are having to make at the present time. A major purpose is to stress the fact that manpower adjustment in low-income areas is not simply an economic problem. It involves cultural patterns that have been handed down for generations and which strongly affect the ability of low-income farmers to make a good adjustment either in agriculture or outside it.

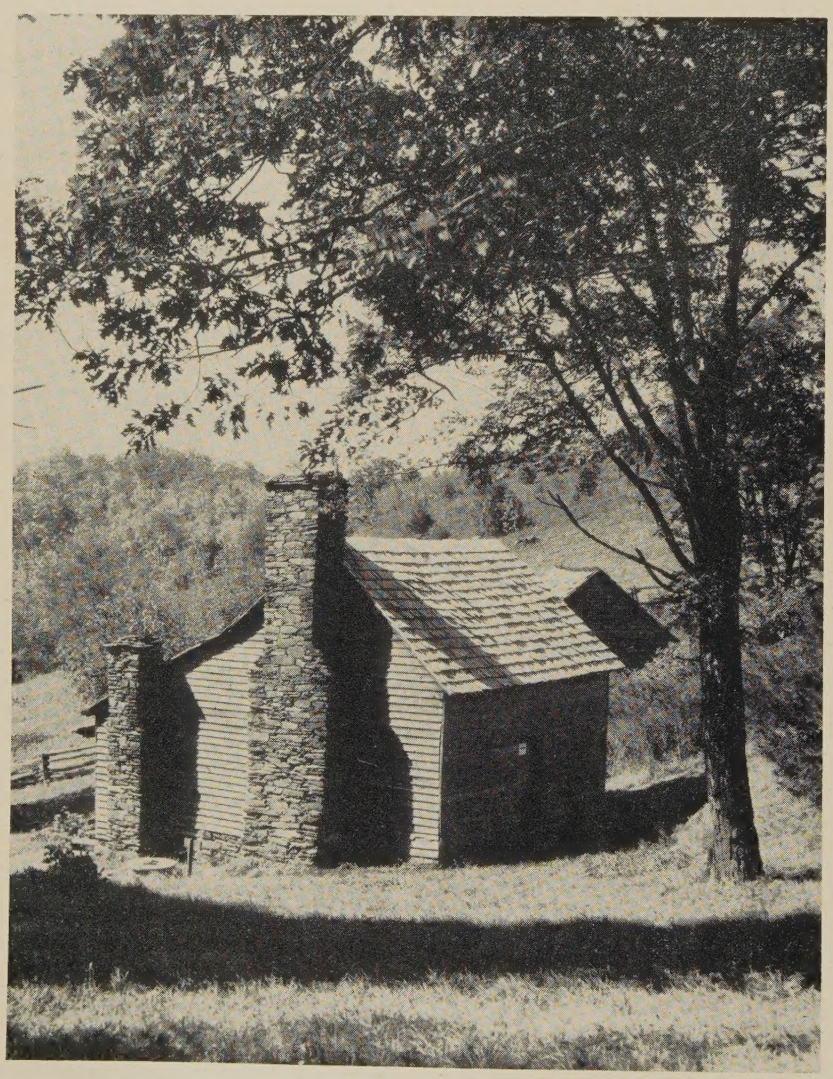
Actually the hill area was first populated by three types of settlers: First, hunters and adventurers who wanted to be free from social responsibility; second, hill farmers from England, Scotland, and other countries, who already had a heritage of subsistence living; and third, wage workers who came in to do lumbering, mining, and other nonfarm work. Cultural exchange has gone on between these groups, but some families have resisted outside contacts. In considering the people who first came to this area, we should remember that the ways of life that have passed from father to son in familistic groups still retain many primitive aspects.

Note that the traditions of these people include little production for the market and they are not geared into our commercial way of life. Their interest in agriculture tends simply to be functional rather than professional or commercial. Their lack of interest in the accumulation of business profits through agriculture, and their accompanying lack of desire to ascertain the most profitable use of their land and labor fit into production for their own use but would be fatal in commercial agriculture.

Commercial farmers conclude that these people lack the entrepreneurial point of view. They are right, because it is not an element in their way of life. Generations of small-scale farming and living have developed a complex of life in which satisfaction with simple living is a chief element.

They not only lack the entrepreneurial point of view; they also lack experience in the use of money, and they feel that giving any great amount of thought to it is sinful. Operating with a minimum amount of money is almost an ingrained complex. They are very conscious of the fact that money is hard to obtain and that a small amount must be made to go a long way. They react immediately against proposals that will cut into their small supply of funds. On the other hand, the use of any large sum of money is outside their complex of understanding, and they are at a loss to know how to handle large amounts wisely. The first salesman they meet may take the entire amount for an automobile that is unsuited to their needs even though the children may have inadequate clothing for school and dozens of minor needs should have been met.

These people try to avoid indebtedness but borrow small amounts in order to meet their cash expenses. Owning a farm is one of their life goals, but they can't afford to go deeply into debt because subsistence farming does not yield large amounts of cash. As the Farm Security Administration discovered, they are overwhelmed by any large debt, even though it is carefully designed to increase the size of their business. A consuming fear that they might never be able to pay off the debt forces them out of agriculture. Not to pay off a debt is strictly dis-



Pioneer Cabin

honorable, and this is especially true of a large one.

A research worker is incredulous when he enters on his record that families of this type had total cash incomes of around $300, $400, or $600 during the previous year. The man in town who has difficulty in living within his income of $6,000, $8,000, or $10,000, feels sorry for "those poor devils out in the hills" and concocts programs to help them. Usually, however, the hill people are more completely adjusted into their round of life than he is in his. His demands continue to rise, but theirs do not. The general increase in levels of living has made him regard their ways and levels of life as poor and inadequate.

These people have a reputation for the enjoyment of leisure. They should also have a reputation for hard and tedious work. Their poor tools and hand equipment mean that some of them work very hard during the planting and harvesting periods of the year. Work with a spade and hoe is real toil as compared to riding a tractor. We might say that they have been less resourceful at avoiding work than some of their mechanized cousins.

The real problem lies among those hill families in which practically all the education and training take place within the family circle. Parents are unable to transmit values, skills, and understandings which they do not have. Hence cultural development occurs at a very slow pace except for the addition of a few of the more obvious gadgets of civilization.

Although the thinking of these people is limited in terms of financial promotion and economic endeavor, it is deep so far as emotions, morals, and religion are concerned. Strong emotional attitudes in regard to morals and religion are central in their cultural complex and buttress them against the desire for wealth, ostentation, and social position. Their thinking on most matters is emotional rather than coldly calculated. Their emotions flare quickly and may involve them in brawls, feuds, romantic irregularities, and more serious offenses.

Photo by Eva Luoma

The mixture of highly moralistic thinking with direct and violent individual action makes them rather uncertain citizens.

Economic adjustment:

These people have a well-integrated round of life that meets their needs and they have been steeped in its wisdom from childhood. They reinforce each other and resist change at all essential points. People are more likely to change from this pattern by inadvertence or accident rather than through any planned program to change them. The movement from subsistence farming into commercial agriculture has been disappointingly slow.

Planned programs to move these people into agriculture in more productive areas have been experimented with and have been abandoned as an avenue of adjustment. Any planned program to move them into nonfarm employment would encounter similar cultural handicaps.

Also, the cultural adjustment that these people must make to become efficient commercial farmers is very great. Extension programs only reach them selectively after they have gained some educational background. It would be simpler to assist these families into a carefully designed program of live-at-home farming and to encourage them to add some nonfarm work and a small amount of specialized commercial production to permit them to meet their cash needs.

Fortunately, local industries have sprung up in the low-income areas and have eased the adjustment prob-

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lem. A 1956 study in the Arkansas Ozarks indicated that only 18 percent of the open-country households gained all their livelihood from agriculture. Sawmilling, poultry processing, canning, and other lines of nonfarm work afforded employment to some member of almost half the families in the area (48 percent). Social security, other retirement payments, and similar nonwork sources of income, were also a more important source of cash income than agriculture.

From the standpoint of economic security, these people are probably best off when they can combine subsistence and commercial farming with nonfarm employment. It must be remembered that they are marginal in the economy and should not rely on any one activity. The many-sided approach of the Rural Development Program may offer our best solution for these people.

Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr

• "Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr: Brothers under the Skin" is the title of an article by Richard Dickinson, Chaplain of Wheaton College, in *Religion in Life,* Nashville, Tenn., Spring, 1958.

Noting that it is "popularly but uncritically assumed that Reinhold Niebuhr differs radically from Walter Rauschenbusch in his conception of history and its meaning," the author states that Niebuhr is more properly understood as a corrective for the popular theology of the 1920s and 30s rather than for the teachings of Walter Rauschenbusch. The parallels in their writings on their understanding of history are then documented.

The greatness of the men may appear to make their writings irreconcilable. Neither called himself a theologian, and neither formulated a systematic theology. If we examine the parallels in their writings and see each in his times and circumstances, "we may find them . . . brothers under the theological skin."

We Study the Rural Church

LAVERN C. DIBBLE

• When I was considering the invitation to become Pastor of the On'wego United Parish (a three-denominational Larger Parish Mission Project in Williamstown, New York), the chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee told me that the members of the Parish Council and a few other officials knew what they were trying to do but that most of the members didn't know what it was all about. I filed that statement for future reference.

The people involved in a larger parish project should have some idea of the Town and Country Church Movement, of various trends in rural life, and the most effective methods of ministering to the changing countryside. In other words, the whole field of the rural church and community should be studied.

We have approached the solution to our problem from several angles, one being a study course for our adult groups. In each of the four regularly organized churches of the Parish we have an adult group engaged in this study, either a woman's society or a mixed adult fellowship group. Since these are diverse groups we find that visual aids are exceedingly helpful, but many pamphlets, brochures, charts, books and other materials are used, also.

The course for this year was outlined by a representative committee meeting with the two pastors of the Parish. Here is the outline for a thirteen-month course:

1. *The Church in Changing Rural Life.* Use of the sound filmstrip, "Beyond City Limits." Discussion of significant changes in the local scene.
2. *Patterns of Cooperation in Town and Country.* A study of various cooperative techniques ranging from simple union services to the complex larger parish set-up.
3. *Standards for Town and Country Churches.* Study of Baptist material related to this theme. Discussion.
4. *Federated Churches.* Study of Ralph Williamson's brochure and other materials. Interesting theme, since two of the churches of the Parish are federated.
5. *The Church and the Rural Community.* The role of the church and her relationship to other community agencies as a spiritualizing factor.
6. *Town and Country Work in New York State.* Study the work of the Rural Church Institute at Ithaca. Use of a state council film, showing migrant work and rural program, etc.
7. *The Group Ministry.* Study of cooperative techniques. Filmstrip.
8. *The Larger Parish.* Study of closely organized parish and role of Parish Council. Use of Mark Rich's book and other material.
9. *The larger Parish.* The film, "On Common Ground," was used. Study of larger possibilities of On'wego Parish.
10. *Achievement Goals for Town and Country Churches.* Study Presbyterian and Methodist material on this theme. Goals of a mission supported parish.
11. *Hymns of the Rural Spirit.* Singing the faith and philosophy of rural life, using the song book by that name. Also study of *Other Types of Rural Ministry in America.*
12. *Work in Southern Mountains.* Used the filmstrip, "Unto the Hills," showing work of Dr. Robert Thomas, a member of Northern N. Y. Methodist Conference.
13. *Missions in the Southwest.* Work with Indian Americans; cowboy missionaries; work in sparsely settled areas.

These studies have proven to be very popular. It may be that a better understanding of the mission of their own parish gives people a clearer vision of the Church's world mission. At the last meeting of the Parish Study Committee it was agreed that all the groups would include the study of foreign missions in their next series.

The Church, the Arts, and Contemporary Culture*

• The full scope of Christian life and work inevitably includes attention to the arts in all their contemporary forms. We may distinguish, and not always properly, between religious and secular art, between the fine arts and the practical arts, between the traditional arts and the mass media of today. Nevertheless, all such esthetic expressions must be included in the territory to which Christian responsibility for the life of men directs itself. The arts, old and new, good and bad, are peculiarly the carriers of meaning and value in our society as in all societies. Thus the arts and the meanings symbolized and communicated have obvious religious and theological significance.

The inseparability of the problem of the arts from that of worship is clear in the light of the recognition of the significance of the symbol. A Christian concern with artistic and popular symbol involves the same enquiry which animates current discussions of liturgy and ecclesiastical art.

The Church should have a vanguard of men and women qualified to interpret the significance of contemporary art for the believer and able to make contact with the influential movements of our time in art, architecture, music, literature and criticism. To identify and encourage such a vanguard, to foster its common understanding of the problems involved, to build bridges of conversation for it with the appropriate secular groups, to open channels for its witness and impact in the life of the churches as well as in society at large—all this requires considered planning and organization.

It is clear that traditional views of the relation of the churches to the arts are no longer sufficient, though they still have their place, often in a revised form. Illustration can be found in the way in which this field has been represented in the programs of theological seminaries where courses in literature and the arts have been taught with three pragmatic goals in mind: (1) to give the future minister competence in the ecclesiastical arts: church music, church architecture, drama in the church, liturgics, etc.; (2) to further his personal culture through acquaintance with some of the great literary and spiritual classics; (3) and through instruction in speech to enhance his skill in the reading of the Scriptures, the use of literature, and the conduct of the liturgy. In a wider context we may note also that the churches sometimes have been interested negatively, as it were, in the morality of art and in the question of censorship.

The newer approach to this whole field in theological education recognizes that these valid pragmatic concerns must be supplemented by a much more fundamental approach. The encounter of the Gospel with the world whether in evangelism, education, apologetic or theology requires a deep appreciation of and initation into the varied symbolic expressions of the culture. It is in such expression at all levels that the moral and spiritual life of the age discloses itself. Christian life and work cannot restrict the sphere of its engagement with the world to evangelism and social ethics. It must relate itself to the culture of the time in all its fateful and intangible aspects. Otherwise the Church's witness will by-pass many of its most powerful adversaries and overlook some of its indispensable and most natural allies.

We are concerned in what follows to point out various aspects of the responsibility of the Church in this area. The urgency of the task is highlighted, as in all aspects of Christian life and work, by the special dilemmas and features of our culture. Not the least of the contributions of modern literature and criticism has been their profound portrayal of the state of men today. What the social sciences can tell us about the contemporary scene needs to be completed by the deeper revelations mediated by the arts. This would be less true if the modern arts were divorced from life or identified with the ivory tower. But the contemporary arts have moved toward wholeness and have the virtue therefore of disclosing the fuller picture of man and society.

The character of our civilization is such that its real inwardness is most fully grasped through the sensitive recorders we know as the artist, the poet, the novelist, the architect, the musician and the dramatist. In fact we have a double resource here: on the one hand, the arts themselves in the widest sense, from the purest or most sophisticated productions to the mass media, can be taken as documents which mirror the time; on the other hand we have also the actual assessment of the human situation as set forth by the most responsible artists and critics. What their criticism is can only be recalled here: the dehumanization of society, the impersonality of wide areas of life, the loss of community with the consequent vulnerability of many to the appeal of inadequate forms of community; the alienation and anxiety which find compensation in scapegoating and hysteria; the dissolution of older loyalties and ideals which leaves men without footing as they seek to orient their lives constructively. These and other features of the modern situation have been both analyzed and dramatized in a succession of modern classics and reappear constantly in many forms of artistic expression, which also often provide sound leads to their solution.

(1) *The first task of the Church in the area of the arts is to know contemporary culture and its expressions and through them to know our time more fully.* Christian "life and work" is necessarily concerned with all aspects of the human and social situation. When we speak of the Chris-

(*Continued on Page* 10)

* This statement was adopted by the Executive Committee of the Department of Worship and the Arts and approved by the Executive Board of the Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of Churches.

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tian concern with contemporary culture, the term "culture" itself by its very ambiguity supports the case. For culture happily suggests not only the arts, the "work of the mind," the "higher culture" associated with literature, architecture, music, the drama, the graphic arts, etc. It is also used to refer to the values and patterns of a civilization, the quality and spirit of an age. This ambiguity of the term testifies to the interrelations of both. We cannot diagnose the human situation without due scrutiny of the arts. We cannot recognize the changes in course or define their direction without attention to the disclosure of these in contemporary artistic manifestations. This first aspect of our involvement with the arts has to do then with their significance as indices and symptoms. It is through them that we can more adequately feel the pulse of our age, recognize the signs of the time and enter into its deeper life. One may here call attention to the way in which contemporary theologians have used the arts in this way in their diagnosis of modern man: Tillich in his *The Religious Situation* and Berdyaev in his *The End of Our Time.* One task of a Christian vanguard in this field is certainly to encourage acquaintance with contemporary literature and the arts in the churches.

(2) *The second task of the Church in the area of the arts is to assess and interpret them in terms of Christian criteria.* We have here the task of what George Every has called "Christian discrimination." This bears both upon the work of art or literature and upon the underlying ethos or values that condition it. The call to "test the spirits," to "discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," to "cast down imagination and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God" and to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"—this call is imperative in an age like ours. It is also at carefully defined points a matter of "taking forth the precious from the vile." (Jer. 15:19)

Here we have a concrete and ready opportunity to challenge and expose the unexamined errors of our contemporaries in all that concerns their values, loyalties, way of life and assumptions in connection with the novels they read, the plays and films they see, the music they play and hear, the buildings in which they live, work and worship, the social symbols they revere, the dreams and fables, indeed the myths they feed upon. All this plays a large part in the inner life, the color of the self, of a modern individual, from the cultural model of the adult to the hero-paradigm of the child. Here we have "the chambers of imagery" (Ezek. 8:12) in the heart. Needless to say we have to deal here with the mass media of the great public as well as with the traditional arts and diverse cultural legacies. Moreover, the confusions of the believer are often as open to correction as are the confusions of those outside the Church. What is involved here is no less than a Christian criticism of life, and no such task is possible without an appeal to theological insights.

But Christian discrimination at work upon contemporary literature and the arts will not be entirely negative. A vanguard of Christian intellectuals, artists and critics will render one of its greatest services in identifying and proclaiming the extra-ordinary wealth of wisdom and insight in contemporary "secular" work. Modern movements in the arts represent often a healthful protest against meagerness or vitiation in the spiritual life of Christendom, a witness to elements of the Christian tradition neglected by the Church, as well as clues to a needed contemporary reformulation of the faith. The Church must be hospitable to such insights and furnish itself with groups qualified to mediate them to all Christians.

(3) *A third task of the Church in the area of the arts is to contribute directly to the health and vitality of the arts and the proper understanding of the vocation of the artist.* The Church has accepted responsibility in social issues. A corresponding responsibility falls upon it in the field of man's imaginative and intuitive life. If this obligation has been overlooked it can be only because a frivolous view of the arts and of the whole domain of the imagination has prevailed. The fateful cleavage between reason and emotion, sense and sensibility, the practical and the spiritual order, has consigned the arts in the minds of many to a marginal and decorative or sentimental role. We restore art to its own vastly serious significance, however, when we recognize that we have to do not with some optional category of "Beauty" but with the whole fateful realm of symbols and the life-meaning determined by them. The redemption of the symbol, the purification of the word or image, then becomes a main task of evangelism understood in its greater sense.

This task can be seen as a two-fold one: first, a direct contribution to the renewal of the serious integrity of the arts and the stimulation of significant artistic activity by Christian artists, intellectuals, and groups; second, a raising of the standards of the ecclesiastical arts. The bearing of the whole matter on Christian worship is of course evident. The church should reassume its ancient and proper responsibility and productivity with reference to all the arts. It could well begin by purging its own arts, educating its own members, developing standards of perception and evaluation, making clear the theological considerations that are crucial, and at all times insisting on the wholeness of the arts in the sense that they must speak to the whole man and not to some isolated sentiment or moral intention. Even those arts of the Church which derive from the great tradition have been falsified in the modern situation and become insipid or precious or esoteric or sentimental.

The task cannot be fulfilled, therefore, without knowledge and use by the Church, including its clergy and laity, of the great art of the past. Paradoxically, the artist of today often has influenced the scholar and the museum official in discovering the past. Through this rediscovery of our heritage of great art and literature we not only repossess it to our own enhancement, but extend and deepen our understanding of contemporary expressions in the arts.

Once the divorce between intellect and imagination had been consecrated, that part of man identified with intellect very naturally fell under the sway not only of science but of the technology that arose from science and finally of the civilization and patterns and values associated with it. A vast prestige attached itself to the conquests of science and its techniques and offered a seductive ideology or way of life. But this culture has been one which because of its very axioms ("knowledge is power;" "evidence is measurable") starved out the esthetic life which therefore had to establish a precarious or defiant life for itself in the sentiments. The arts of a rationalized society have celebrated technological man—a kind of propagandistic art—or offered themselves as a private solace or, (as all too often in the modern mass media), as vehicles of sensationalism for anonymous multitudes seeking a vicarious substitute for genuine personal life.

Fortunately the arts at their best have now for some decades sought to repossess the lost territory and to reassert the claim of the imagination over the whole man and the whole of life. By a paradox art becomes more relevant when it becomes more autonomous. When it is recognized that genuine art is not didactic, moralistic, propagandistic, inspirational —and in this connection, not representational—then its proper universality and cultural relevance are reestablished. But this same law holds for the Gospel and for the arts of the Church.

The Gospel, with its doctrines of the Creation and the Incarnation, concerns the whole man and man as he is conditioned by the structures of his social, economic and cultural life. Therefore it is important that the Church be receptive to all vital movements in the arts today and understand its task and sensitize its speech in relationship to the most significant symbolizations. For much of modern literature and art represents a momentous struggle in the modern soul to recover depth and wholeness, to reaffirm personal responsibility in the face of dehumanization, to find a true order beneath our modern anarchy, a true ground for human freedom and creativeness in a culture marked by impersonal tyrannies, and so to prepare the way for renewed human community.

(4) *A fourth task for the Church in the area of the arts is to heal the breach that has arisen between the religious institution and those chiefly identified with the arts in our society.* The history of this cleavage need not be retold. The present situation in this respect is but part of a wider picture in which many important groups and elements of the Christian West have found themselves alienated from organized Christianity. Many of the most significant secular voices of the modern period have nonetheless evidenced their debt to the Christian tradition and have given expression, though often in ambiguous or heretical ways, to aspects of the faith neglected by the Church. Today we are in a situation which makes possible a new *rapprochement* between the two. The modern crisis has pushed the agnostic and the disaffected to new dimensions and new depths in such a way that they find relevance again in certain features of the Christian understanding of life. On the other hand the Church itself has been quickened and has produced thinkers who have both restated the faith with new power and interpreted the times so significantly that the secular world has found itself addressed. In addition to this the Church has begun to produce theologians and critics who have dealt authoritatively with culture and the arts, as well as artists of genuine stature. Many contacts have already been established in these ways; they should be furthered.

(5) *A final task of the Church in the area of the arts is to bear witness to the common ground to which both religion and the arts refer.* While the life of the artist offers many analogies to the life of faith, it is the responsibility of the Church to articulate its understanding of man and his destiny which enables man to be a person and express the freedom of the Christian man. Religion has a depth which art needs lest it become tempted to estheticism. Religion, on the other hand, is expressed most profoundly through the forms which constitute the proper concern of art. As the Church is necessarily indebted to artistic expressive forms, so we believe that art has need of the religious dimension which has been associated traditionally with the highest artistic achievement. There is a true bond here which, if broken, leaves both the arts and religion in danger of succumbing to self-sufficiency and deprives man of a dialectic in which religion and the arts fructify each other.

The task of the Church under these five heads can be adequately carried out only as the Church brings together men and women competent in the arts and concerned with their present developments and their cultural significance. The general membership of the churches awaits clarification of the many issues in question from those who are occupied with them. The desired vanguard must be mobilized, its members brought into productive relationship not only with one another but with various groups both within and without the Church. The terms of the discourse cannot be confined to the arts in any narrow sense but must involve the wider problems having to do with the symbols and values of our society and the vehicles of communication in our culture.

Wisdom from Shakespeare

There was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently.

The worst is not so long as we can say, "This is the worst."

For nought so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give.

Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep.

In vain he seeketh others to suppress,
Who hath not learn'd himself first to subdue.

Easter Film

• The Family Films' studio has been the scene of much activity and excitement in preparation for the hour-long motion picture, POWER OF THE RESURRECTION, which is now before the cameras.

The film, being made for the National Council of Churches of Christ for a nationwide television Easter message, shows with dramatic impact the great power and influence of Christ's resurrection in the lives of the early Christians. The Apostle Peter tells a deeply moving story, which drives home the all-important message of the church—that the power of His resurrection was not just for the day in which Jesus rose from the dead, or Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit swept upon His followers; it is for all people, all time, and all places. Christ lives today!

Much work and many hours have gone into completing the final details of production, and the actors have been selected with extreme care. Mr. Henry Denker and Mr. Sam Hersh, co-producers, point out that Biblical characterizations are the most difficult to portray believably. Mr. Denker of New York City, is a well-known radio and television writer.

The Reverend Alexander Ferguson, production head of the NCCCC Broadcasting and Film Commission, and the Reverend Donald Lantz, religious education director of Family Films, are the technical advisors. Resource materials and photographs obtained during their recent visit to the Holy Land were used in preproduction planning.

Power of the Resurrection will be produced in 35mm. color and will be shown on Easter day, 1959, on nationwide television.

Benevolence

In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind's concern is charity.

—Alexander Pope

Free Churches in a Free Society

• The distinctive aspects of organized religion in America are interpreted by Ronald E. Osborn of the School of Religion at Butler University, in *The Spirit of American Christianity* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1958. $3.75). The main emphasis is on Protestantism. The text was first prepared in the form of lectures for Europeans. The author is a historian who observes with care and generalizes in language that is clear to layman and professional.

"Whatever we do, it must be done quickly," Lyman Beecher declared about a century ago in a passage quoted in this book. The sentence provides a clue to understanding of much of the activism of the American churches. The Methodists were building a new church a day when Robert G. Ingersoll told a convention of free thinkers that "the churches were dying out all over the land." The report aroused C. C. McCabe who was busy with Methodist church extension to telegraph Mr. Ingersoll that the Methodists would "make it two a day." Soon the Methodists were singing a new hymn describing the dismay of the infidels on receipt of the McCabe telegram, closing with these lines:

" 'All hail the power of Jesus name!' "

"We're building two a day."

The great doctrine of the priesthood of all believers has been emphasized at times "in radical fashion." The lay preachers arose in many places and exhorted their neighbors. Vachel Lindsay described his grandfather Frozee in a poem ending:

"He served a rigid Christ, but served Him well—

"And for a lifetime saved the countryside."

Professor Osborn notes that James H. Garfield was a teacher-preacher in the Disciples of Christ before he entered politics.

These latter years the professional minister has received growing acceptance, but Europeans especially note the initiative taken by lay people in financing churches, in conducting lay organizations within the local churches, and in teaching in the Sunday schools. And church members generally expect their minister to be their personal friend, and not only a person who comes when there is a crisis in family life.

Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the author states, are "caught up in intense rivalry" on the American scene, and each is strong enough to strive for dominance of our society "as a realistic possibility."

The spirit of the frontier survives and is partly expressed in an intense localism. But with all our parochialism, we support an ecumenical movement. Our churches are free of the state, and regard themselves as very independent, yet we search for the means of unity.

There are warm theological conversations or debates, there may be a theological renaissance, but these have not impressed the laity. In America most churchmembers stress the simple faith of grace for all. This simple faith is an important fact in church history. "Its significance for theology needs to be considered." For to American churchmembers, "Christ, not theology, is the Lord of the church."

During recent years there has been a decline in organized social action by the churches, but everywhere there is evidence that concern for social welfare is somehow expressed. There is a high degree of freedom to discuss issues. Gladden and Rauschenbusch are not without current influence.

The current "revival of religion" is described as not thoroughgoing. Our churches sometimes appear overconfident and complacent in their piety. They operate, however, under severe limitations in a most secular culture.

"Televangelism 1959"

• This unusual project presents thirteen half-hour dramas in the series, "This is the Answer," produced by the Southern Baptists. Beginning on Sunday, January 4 and extending for thirteen weeks, the project is basically a non-denominational effort.

Christmas Eve in "The Basin"

HAZEL B. CORLISS

• Our small farm is located in the south-eastern corner of southern Vermont. Completely surrounded by trees and hills, this elevated section has long been known as "The Basin."

I was alone in The Basin on Christmas Eve and felt quite forlorn, thinking of other folks with their families. I thought of my husband, making his lonely rounds as a watchman. My heart yearned for our only child and daughter-in-law who were many miles away. I wistfully thought of our two-year-old granddaughter and what a joy it would be to watch her on Christmas morning. I poignantly recalled the merry childhood holidays I had shared with five sisters and two brothers.

I missed the friends who had helped me to enjoy the holidays when I lived in the city. During the past twelve years I had had neither time nor opportunity for taking part in church festivities or attending Christmas parties. The Fall butchering had always come so close to Christmas that, although surrounded by woodland, I had never had the time to even gather Christmas greens.

On Christmas Eve I again resolutely set out on my annual pilgrimage, following the cow-path up to the high pastures. Passing the flowing brook, I rejoiced that a loving and forgiving God had at last sent the life-giving rains. The foot prints in the snow showed that the wild creatures had been scurrying over field and mountain—they knew that this was the night when Earth would receive her King!

Reaching the highest knoll, I saw the distant mountains standing serene and steadfast against the evening sky. To me, the world was shut out, and the Basin became the little town of Bethlehem. Our farm buildings below resembled a tiny village and our animals, bedded down for the night, would soon be in a deep and dreamless sleep. The reflected glow of the setting sun transformed the window panes into harps of gold. The glory of the Lord was shining round about.

As dusk descended upon The Basin, all was hushed and white. One lone star appeared and shone directly over the barn with its empty manger.

Suddenly I was no longer alone. The billowing clouds in the sky became a multitude of Heavenly Hosts praising God and saying: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing!" In the cascading brook below I heard the angels singing: "Glory to God in the Highest!" Both Heaven and Nature were proclaiming that Christ was born in Bethlehem!

The white-robed birches were like the shepherds watching over their flocks by night. The tall pines were the wise men with the branches adoringly bending low, bearing gifts of ermine snow.

The spirit of the Christ Child was everywhere as I gazed at this star of wonder. In the darkening meadows of The Basin, it shone with an everlasting light, a symbol of the hopes and fears of all the years.

During my hour in the high pastures, I felt much closer to God than I had ever felt when sharing an artificial Christmas celebration in the city. Descending the hill before full darkness fell, I knew that my heart had really seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. And again God had given me a very special blessing on Christmas Eve.

Later, sitting by the fire, I was no longer lonely. Instead, I thought of how much the weary world needs to discard the tinsel of today's commercialism and return to the simple things. We need to come closer to God and remember the true meaning of Christmas.

You will never "find" time for anything. If you want time you must make it.

—CHARLES BUXTON

"The Cooperative Organization of Consumers"

• "The hope of the future is that farmers, workers, and small businessmen, who suffer periodic losses of property and employment in depressions, and who do not receive their fair share of the national income even in normal times, will organize themselves at an increasingly rapid rate as consumers, producers, and citizens. Thus they may build a stable, just, and efficient cooperative economy while they lay the economic foundations necessary for prosperity and peace." Thus E. R. Bowen writes in a book, title above. (Chicago, The Cooperative League, 343 South Dearborn St., 1957. $1.00)

E. R. Bowen was a manufacturer of farm implements in the 1920s. After the 1929 depression and much personal study he could write: "Finally I concluded that the consumer cooperative movement was the principle economic means of breaking the bottleneck that prevented widespread distribution to consumers everywhere of the potential abundance that the power machinery I had helped build could produce." In the early 1930s he became general secretary of the Cooperative League, from which he retired. He has since written six studies, including the one here reviewed, for the purpose of helping to build consumer cooperatives faster and better."

The why and how of consumer cooperative organizations and their relation to producer and public (or governmental) organizations are considered. There is a chapter on national and international cooperative developments. Figures are given on the extent of cooperatives in the U.S. and in Northern Europe.

"Life in a cooperative Community" is the title of the closing chapter, and George W. Russell (A.E.) is quoted: " 'We should imagine better than the best we know.' " Mr. Bowen puts it thus: "Our big job is to transform the communities where we live." The consumer cooperative store should be "the nucleus of a cooperative community."

National Committee on Farm Labor Established

• Formation of the *National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor,* a new organization including former Senator Herbert H. Lehman, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dr. Clark Kerr, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg and other educational and religious leaders, was announced.

The announcement was made by Dr. Frank P. Graham and Mr. A. Philip Randolph, co-chairmen of the new Committee. Impetus for organizing the Committee came from the National Sharecroppers Fund's conference on Migratory Labor and Low Income Farmers.

The co-chairmen made public, at the same time, the new Committee's Statement of Purpose, which asserts that its "special concern" is "with the plight of the small farm families, the wage workers and the migrant workers whose depressed conditions are a challenge to national concern and action." The statement concludes by explaining: "The purposes of the Committee are to assemble and evaluate documentary material and qualified opinion concerning the extent to which the agricultural economy of the United States is dependent upon the inefficient use and low standard of living of farm labor, both domestic and foreign, and to formulate a program to the end that the farm worker may make his maximum contribution to and achieve his full share of participation in the American standard of living."

Seminar in Washington, D. C.

• The annual seminar on The Christian Farmer and His Government will be held at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., February 3-5. This is an informal study group, sponsored by the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches. A registration fee of $1.00 will be payable on registration at the church. Participation is at the invitation of denominations or councils of churches.

Churches Make Plans to Observe Scout Sunday, February 8, 1959

• High light of a week of special events commemorating the 49th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America will be the observance of Boy Scout Sunday on February 8, 1959, by Scouts of Protestant and Catholic faiths. Members of the Jewish faith will observe Scout Sabbath on Saturday, February 7. "Mormon" churches have designated February 1 as Scout Sunday.

Scout Sunday is usually the Sunday closest to the anniversary date of the Boy Scouts of America, which is February 8. Because Race Relations Sunday in 1959 will be observed on February 8, some Protestant churches plan to recognize Scouting on February 1 or 15. In some churches Scouting will be included in the observances of Youth Week, January 25—February 1.

Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorers are expected to fulfill their religious duties regularly in accord with their faith or convictions. On Scout Sunday or Sabbath they are requested to wear their uniforms in attendance at religious services.

Scouts are encouraged to attend worship services with their families. However, some Scout units have traditionally attended worship services in a body and plan to carry out this practice on Scout Sunday.

Suggestions and resource materials for the observance of Scout Sunday in Protestant and Orthodox Catholic churches are given below.

The Protestant Committee on Scouting recommends consideration of the following suggestions for observance at regular worship services:

1. Use the Scout Sunday program folders.
2. Build the sermon on a theme that relates Scouting to the Christian message.
3. Invite Scouts to participate in the order of service.
4. Use Scouts as ushers at the service.
5. Recognize and express appreciation of Scout leaders in the church.
6. Include a statement on Scouting in the church bulletin.
7. Present God and Country awards.
8. Present Eagle Scout badges.
9. Provide opportunity for contributions to Protestant chaplain service at local Boy Scout camp next summer.

The Protestant Committee on Scouting earnestly requests that all churches that have Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorers in their membership employ one or more of the suggested ways for recognizing the values of Scouting as a means of helping boys to grow "in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man."

Faith

LESLIE T. WELLS

Do you have a shining star,
That even on a stormy night
Always tells you where you are,
An inextinguishable light?

Do you have a faultless compass,
Set before each voyage is sailed,
With a Pilot for the harbor,
One whose hand has never failed?

—From *A Further Harvest*

Prayer for the Church

O Gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy Holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the same of him, who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

—From *The Book of Common Prayer*

BOOK REVIEWS

We Ordinary Preachers. By Raymond M. Shipman. Vantage Press, New York. 1957. $3.75.

As one who has already in the first years of his ministry had more than one occasion on which to differ in basic assumptions and "middle axioms" with older men, I began reading Raymond Shipman's *"We Ordinary Preachers"* ready to disagree with him. Much to my surprise, I found Shipman speaking directly to me.

Here is a running commentary on the work of the pastoral ministry written to help "those men who are unknown and even obscure, who receive almost no recognition, but who are sincere, loyal, devoted, persistent, patient, a blessing to their people, and who faithfully keep on through the years . . . of whom it might almost be said that they keep the church going." Drawing upon a wealth of experience as a pastor and a Methodist District Superintendent plus a lifetime of wide reading, Mr. Shipman manages to touch upon practically every facet of the pastoral ministry from the virtues of humor and tact to visiting one sick with a contagious disease. In such a sweep, his treatment of many subjects is necessarily brief, but invariably I found him hitting the proverbial nail on the head.

The author has, it seems to me, several major emphases that stand out: the need for constant fellowship with God in prayer and meditation, without which one goes through the motions of the ministry but nothing happens; discipline in what is often the grind of sermon preparation; and above all constant contact with people in their homes. Here he states in down-to-earth hard-hitting words the on-going requirements of the pastoral ministry which far too many of us tend to neglect. For example: "Too many of our ministers are tending someone else's patch, going to meetings, making speeches and failing in pastoral work. One wonders whether a subtle, hardly realized egotism may be operating. Doing those other things gives a minister prominence, but going quietly from house to house attracts no attention . . . If a man upon surveying the way in which he is put together, finds that he really does not have the pastor's heart, does not love people for their own sake and for the Master's sake, he had better decide that he is not fit for the ministry and should take up some other work —and let him decide quickly."

Other high points of the book include the following: the task of counseling is treated briefly but with good insight into the non-directive procedure, something not found too often in the professional ministry; over half of the chapter entitled "What Manner of Man" is devoted to the importance of a sense of humor in the work of the ministry; and for those who have battled the frustrating burden of time-consuming administration, the last two chapters give a new helpful attitude toward that ministerial headache.

At only one point did I find myself in serious disagreement with Mr. Shipman, that being when he cautions the minister in preaching "to stay within his own field, which is religion." Caution there surely should be, but here it seems to me the author is speaking against what is so urgently needed today, men trained in theology and ethics who have also disciplined themselves to an understanding of the technical and policy decisions faced by their people in business, government, labor union and political party.

Written to direct and inspire the ordinary preacher in the demanding but rewarding work of the pastoral ministry, I found the book doing just that.

—Austin Engel

A Further Harvest. By Leslie T. Wells, Route 1, 90 Sound Avenue, Riverhead, N.Y. 1958. $1.00.

A Further Harvest, From the Farm by the Sea is Mr. Wells' second booklet of poems—"from out of his heart and the good earth." Perhaps the best comment that could be made of this and his former booklet, "Faith, Fun, and Fantasy," is that of *The Rural New Yorker:* "Written by a Long Island potato farmer whose family has tilled the same soil for more than 300 years, the poems are delightful, yet sobering. They are a reading experience, mellowing the soul for a while—maybe forever."

From time to time we re-print these poems in *Town and Country Church.* —.R.B.R

The Teacher is a Horticulturist

• "The teacher's role is . . . that . . . of horticulturist," writes William R. Mueller, associate professor of English at the Women's College of the University of North Carolina, in *The Christian Scholar,* 257 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N.Y., June, 1958.

"Paul knew this. When the Corinthians were divided in allegiance, arguing among themselves as to whether they belonged to Apollos or to Paul or to some other Christian teacher, he called them sharply to know the true function of the teacher: 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.' Knowing our own role, let us repeatedly impress upon our students the fact that, if we are planters and waterers, they are plants and not sponges. A sponge absorbs water, retains it for a while, and then drips it out in a miserably undigested form on a final examination. A plant, on the other hand, is nourished and vitalized by the water, becoming transformed into something precious. When our students leave us, it will be to our shame and their poverty if they file out as blurred carbon copies of ourselves, as globs of ill-wrought clay, or as wizened, shriveled sponges. Let each one be that unique plant which is the realization of his own inner being; let each one be what he was meant to be—himself."

Religious Significance of Rochdale Principles

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• Ever since a few weavers of Rochdale, England, put together a set of principles for democratic economic organization, people have argued about the ultimate purpose of co-operatives. Their views have ranged between two extremes.

The first opinion is that any co-op is a business, period. It's purpose is efficient performance of certain services for its members' benefit. It is limited in its functions to these services and is not an agency of social reform.

Opposed to this viewpoint is one that runs something like this. The Rochdale technique is really more than a technique. It encourages the highest and best in people and produces desirable results in persons. It is practical idealism. It is a way to reorganize the economic system. It is both moral and efficient.

Co-op members and church people range widely in their thinking between these extremes. The principles, tested by more than a century and embodied in thousands of organizations are, as follows:

> Anyone may join a co-op.
> Each member has one vote and only one; no proxy voting.
> Share capital gets a moderate, limited return.
> Members divide what's left at the end of each year, each sharing in proportion to his purchases. This is the patronage refund.
> The co-op remains neutral in religious and political matters.
> The co-op sells goods and services for cash at market prices.
> The co-op constantly engages in education of members and non-members.

Religious neutrality troubles many church people. But the principle applies only to the co-op itself. Co-operators have always shown that they had plenty of ideas about religion, as well as politics. Usually, religious neutrality means that the co-op isn't committed to advance any particular church. It should be noted, however, that members of 1,200 church and religious organizations in North America have organized credit unions. It's also true that in some countries, various economic organizations — including cooperatives—follow church lines.

Msgr. M. M. Coady of St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia reminds us that economic cooperation is never un-religious or antagonistic to religion. Indeed, religion high and true teaches brotherhood and fellowship and mutual helpfulness. Clergymen do not rise in their pulpits and advocate that men shall be uncooperative with one another in their economic affairs.

They are, however, tragically indifferent to the forms of organized cooperation in their comunities and seldom specific in their advice about human cooperation. The result is much unimplemented idealism in our churches, with church-goers uninformed about efforts to build economic democracy.

Yet many farmer co-ops were built by country church lay people. Many of the most prophetic religious voices have spoken good words for the Rochdale technique. One layman who is a credit union officer called it "fellowship in action."

The Japanese Protestant evangelist Kagawa ardently favors cooperatives—"brotherhood economics," as he calls it. The Lutheran Raiffeisen, who founded the first credit unions in Germany, promoted "brotherhood credit." Both felt they were performing a Christian ministry when they organized cooperatives.

A Lutheran pastor, H. Christian Sonne, organized the first co-op store in Denmark, evidently seeing some benefit beyond economic efficiency. Another Nova Scotian, Roman Catholic Bishop John R. McDonald wrote, "Cooperation requires intelligent, unselfish, mutual action."

Two laymen in Britain, some years after Rochdale, declared that the social invention of these poor workers was "the true outcome of the Christian religion."

So, while some see cooperatives as simply an economic efficiency machine, a host of others find also a technique for introducing a new morality in economic life. Many of them, indeed, are churchmen firmly grounded in the religious tradition who feel they have found a practical channel for the people's idealism.

—From *Cooperative News Service*

For Divine Strength

• The church has many critics, some of whom are outside the church. They do not worry me; I just stay away from them. The ones I do worry about are those whose names are on the church roll, but to whom that means nothing. Like the man at the pool of Bethesda, they wail that nobody will help them. They complain, "The preacher never comes to see me . . . I don't like the music . . . I go, but nobody shakes hands with me . . . the Church is after my money . . . too many of the members are hypocrites . . . " and so on, ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

But I have noticed that when the complaining fellow begins to walk on his own within the church, to support it with his prayers, his presence and his gifts and his service, he finds joy and strength therein. One is "made whole" only when he begins some worthwhile activity. The sickest people are usually those who have the least to do.

> CHARLES L. ALLEN, in *The Touch of the Master's Hand* (The Fleming H. Revell Company).

Convocation Issue

• The next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will carry a report of the National Convocation, held at York, Pennsylvania, October 21-23, 1958.